

6. (b) (6)	Lt. Comdr, USN	Navy Cross	Comdr. Air Force, Pac.Flt.
Massey, Lance E.	Lt. Comdr, USN	DFC Posthumously	" " " " "
Lindsey, Eugene E.	Lt. Comdr, USN	DFC Posthumously	" " " " "
(b) (6)	Lt, USN	DFC	" " " " "

Cause: Adm. Nimitz says "specific facts, hitherto unknown, now brought to the attention of the CinC, Pacific Fleet shows that:

(b) (6) destroyed 4 enemy two-engined bombers and 3 enemy fighters being serviced on the field;

Lt. Comdr. Massey scored a bomb hit on an 18,000 ton transport;

Lt. Comdr. Lindsey scored several bomb hits on a 12,000 ton auxiliary vessel as well as on hangars;

(b) (6) destroyed an enemy hangar.

"It is believed that the awards previously given the subject officers were insufficient and if the present recommended action is taken, the prior awards should be cancelled."

7. (b) (6)	Capt. (E) USCG	Headquarters	Cons. and rec.	Chf. BuPers
	Avia. Cadet	Anacostia	" " "	" "

Cause: Entered a burning Pullman, crawled around in under it to bring out the injured; displayed personal bravery, quick thinking, calm direction and concerted action at the B & O R.R. wreck near Frederickton the morning of Sept. 24, 1942.

(Letter written by Vice Pres., F.D. Adams, Paine & Williams Co., Cleveland).

LINDSEY, Eugene Elbert (Missing) Lt Comdr USN

USS ENTERPRISE

Midway

Recommended for NAVY CROSS by CinC Pac Serial 18a P15(I)
of 7-18-42—Ref: CinC Pac Ltr P15(1)/QB/(05) Serial 3013
pf 7-16-42—CinC Pac Ltr 8-1-42—P15(2)/(05) Serial 3144
Rec BuPers QB4(840) 8-7-42

Awarded 8-13-42 Bd Awd

For extraordinary heroism & distinguished service as
pilot of VT-6 in Battle of Midway on June 4. He pressed
home his attack against Jap invasion fleet with such
boldness, determination & utter disregard of personal
safety that he contributed immeasurably to the magnifi-
(over)

cent victory of our forces. Conditions under which the pilots of his sqdn attacked were such that it is highly improbable the occasion will ever arise where other pilots will be called upon to demonstrate equal courage. His conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

Finalized File, Casualties and Allotments

29 July 1943

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER EUGENE ELBERT LINDSEY, UNITED STATES NAVY, ACTIVE, DECEASED

Re: Service of

1905 Jul 2 Born in Sprague, Washington.

1923 Sep 8 Midshipman from 5th Arkansas District.

1927 Jun 2 U.S.S. NEVADA. Reported 3 June; detached 25 August.
Naval Academy. Reported 26 August; detached same date.
Aug 16 Commissioned ad interim Ensign from 2 June 1927.
Sep 26 Accepted appointment and executed oath of office.
Sep 2 Duty connection fitting out U.S.S. SARATOGA, American Brown
Boveri Electric Corporation, Camden, N. J. Reported 26 Sep.
Sep 2 U.S.S. SARATOGA. Reported 16 November; detached 8 December,
1928.

1928 Mar 6 Commissioned regular Ensign from 2 June 1927.
Dec 11 Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida (instruction). Reported
2 January 1929; detached 14 November, 1929.

1929 Nov 11 Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet (VB Squadron ONE-B) U.S.S.
LEXINGTON, (duty involving flying). Reported 21 December.

1930 Aug 30 Commissioned ad interim Lieutenant (junior grade) from 2 June
1930.

1931 Jan 14 Commissioned regular Lieutenant (junior grade) from 2 June 1930.

1930 Jul 1 VB Squadron ONE-B, Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet changed to
VF Squadron FIVE-B. Detached 20 April 1931.

1931 May 9 U.S.S. LEXINGTON (duty involving flying). Reported 21 April;
detached 25 May, 1933.

1933 May 13 VP Squadron SIX-E, Aircraft Squadrons, Pearl Harbor, T. H.
(duty involving flying). Reported 29 June, detached 31 May,
1935.

1935 Apr 5 Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. (duty involving flying under
instrn. at the Postgraduate School). Reported 26 June; de-
tached 5 June, 1937.

1936 Aug 25 Commissioned ad interim Lieutenant from 30 June, 1936.

1937 Feb 17 Commissioned regular Lieutenant from 30 June, 1936.
Apr 26 Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pa. (duty involving flying
instrn. under the supervision of the Postgraduate School).
Reported 5 June; detached 2 August.
Apr 26 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. (duty involv. flying -
instrn. under the supervision of the Postgraduate School).
Reported 3 September; detached 8 June, 1938.

1938 Apr 6 Observation Squadron Four (U.S.S. **MARYLAND**), duty involv. flying. Reported 1 July; detached 29 January 1940.

1940 Jan 22 Observation Squadron Four, Naval Air Station, San Pedro, Calif. (duty involv. flying). Reported 30 January; detached 3 June.

Mar 28 Torpedo Squadron Six. (U.S.S. **ENTERPRISE**), duty involv. flying. Reported 5 June; detached 9 October 1941.

1941 Sep 3 Commanding Torpedo Squadron Six, (duty involv. flying). Reported 9 October.

Dec 24 Appointed Lieutenant Commander (for temporary service) from 1 December 1941. (Act of July 24, 1941 (Public No. 188-77th Congress)).

1942 Jan 3 Accepted appointment and executed oath of office.

Mar 6 Commissioned regular Lieutenant Commander from 1 November 1941.

Designated as Naval Aviator (Heavier-than-Air).

Qualified as deep-sea diver.

Completed Naval War College correspondence course in international law.

Completed postgraduate course in aeronautical engineering.

Medals:

American Defense Service Medal-Fleet Clasp-8 September 1939 to 7 December 1941.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS: "For extraordinary achievement in aerial combat as Commander of Torpedo Squadron SIX, U.S.S. **ENTERPRISE**, in action against enemy Japanese forces at Kwajalein and Wotje Atolls, Marshall Islands, February 1, 1942. Leading the first division of his squadron in repeated runs and drops over an objective of surface vessels and shore installations, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey launched two highly successful horizontal bombing attacks. Despite withering anti-aircraft opposition, direct hits were scored on a 12,000 ton enemy auxiliary vessel and shore installations which included five hangars. His great courage and tenacity in fulfilling a hazardous mission were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

NAVY CROSS: "For extraordinary heroism and courageous devotion to duty while piloting an airplane of Torpedo Squadron SIX in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942. Participating in a vigorous and intensive assault against the Japanese invasion fleet, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey pressed home his attack with relentless determination, in the face of a terrific barrage of anti-aircraft fire. The unprecedented conditions under which his squadron launched its offensive were so exceptional that it is highly improbable the occasion may ever recur where other pilots of the service will be called upon to demonstrate an equal degree of gallantry and fortitude. His extreme disregard of personal safety contributed materially to the success of our forces and his loyal conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Date of death: Presumptive: 5 June 1943. Officially reported missing in action as of 4 June 1942, when the plane of which he was pilot was shot down in the Battle of Midway. (In compliance with Section 5 of Public Law 490, as amended, death is presumed to have occurred on 5 June 1943.)

Cause: Enemy action.

Place: Pacific Area.

Next of Kin: Wife:

(b) (6)

By direction of the Chief of Naval Personnel.

A. C. Jacobs
Commander, U.S.N.R.
Head of the Casualties
and Allotments Section

Summary of Action:

As their Commanding Officer Captain Marc A Mitscher USN of the USS Hornet (CV-8) recommended the Medal of Honor (MOH) be awarded to all 15 pilots of Torpedo Squadron 8 (VT-8) who attacked Japanese Naval Forces north of Midway Island on June 4, 1942. Captain Mitscher stated in his after action report for the Battle of Midway (BOM) dated June 13, 1942: "This Squadron in (sic) deserving of the highest honors for finding the enemy, pressing home its attack, without fighter protection and without diverting dive bomber attacks to draw the enemy fire." In paragraph 21 he continued. "Attention is particularly invited to Enclosures (C) (Recommendations for Awards). Inasmuch as the action covered by this report was an action involving actual combat by aircraft only, as far as this vessel was concerned, and considering the strategic importance of the battle, it is urged that the awards recommended in Enclosure (C) be granted. In particular the Commanding Officer feels that the conduct of Torpedo Squadron Eight, led by an indomitable Squadron Commander, is one of the most outstanding exhibitions of personal bravery and gallantry that has ever come to his attention in the records of the past or present."

In the After Action Report for the USS Enterprise (CV-6) for the Battle of Midway (BOM) dated June 8, 1942 Captain Murray stated:

"The attack delivered upon enemy carriers by the **torpedo squadrons of our forces** is believed to be without parallel for determined and courageous action in the face of overwhelming odds. These crews were observed to commence their attack against heavy anti-aircraft fire from enemy carriers and supporting vessels while opposed by enemy Zero fighters in large numbers. The enemy fighter opposition was so strong and effective that ten torpedo planes out of fourteen of Torpedo Squadron SIX did not return. It is recommended that the Navy Cross be awarded to each pilot and gunner of Torpedo Squadron SIX who participated in this bold and heroic attack."

In the After Action Report for Task Force Sixteen for the BOM dated June 16, 1942 Rear Admiral Spruance stated:

"Except for the Hornet dive bombers failing to find the target on the forenoon of 4 June, all operations were conducted approximately as intended, and the work of the carrier squadrons on which the success or failure of the action depended was beyond praise. This applies particularly to the first attack made on 3 CVs about noon on 4 June which decided the action. **The attacks made at this time by the torpedo squadrons, prior to the arrival of the dive bombers, was of an especially gallant nature.**"

In December 1942, the Bureau of Naval Personnel Information Bulletin No 309 awarded the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Lieutenant Commander Eugene Lindsey as detailed in the following citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Lieutenant Commander Eugene Elbert Lindsey (NSN: 0-61684), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy while serving as Pilot of a carrier-based Navy Torpedo Plane and Squadron Commander of Torpedo Squadron SIX (VT-6), attached to the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE (CV-6), during the "Air Battle of Midway," against enemy Japanese forces on 4 June 1942. Participating in a vigorous and intensive assault against the Japanese invasion fleet, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey pressed home his attack with relentless determination in the face of a terrific barrage of anti-aircraft fire. The unprecedented conditions under which his squadron launched its

offensive were so exceptional that it is highly improbable the occasion may ever recur where other pilots of the service will be called upon to demonstrate an equal degree of gallantry and fortitude. His extreme disregard of personal safety contributed materially to the success of our forces and his loyal conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Due to the incredible danger every dive bomber and torpedo plane pilot from the USS Enterprise, USS Yorktown, USS Hornet and Midway Island faced on the morning of June 4, 1942, 95 of 98 of them received the Navy Cross. 55 of 98 were reported Missing in Action and subsequently declared Killed In Action. However, no Medals of Honor were awarded for any action over the Japanese fleet that morning.

The purpose of this summary of action is to fully document the complete history of the actions taken by Lieutenant Commander Lindsey over a period of 24 months, from June 3, 1940 to June 4, 1942 as the Commanding Officer of Torpedo Squadron 6 that led the 14 pilots of VT-6 to follow him in the attack of an overwhelming force, without fighter support, or any other diverting forces on June 4, 1942. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey's story is even more inspiring because of the injuries he had sustained a week earlier and his gritty determination to lead his squadron on the morning of June 4th. Prior to that action Lieutenant Commander Lindsey had led these same pilots as they conducted successful raids against the Japanese held Islands of Kwajalein, Wake, and Marcus. As will be shown in this SOA the effect of Lieutenant Commander Lindsey's leadership and his squadron's actions on June 4, 1942 had such a determining factor on victory at Midway that the award of a MOH is the only acceptable award. Furthermore, the strategic importance of the victory at Midway cannot be understated. Without the tactical contributions of Torpedo Squadron Six at Midway it is likely the US Navy would have lost several additional aircraft carriers, ships, aircraft, and the Island of Midway. The Japanese plan was to use the seizure of Midway and the destruction of the remaining US Navy aircraft carriers as a springboard for the invasion of Hawaii. This would have greatly increased the length of the war in the Pacific with hundreds of thousands of additional casualties on both sides.

Preliminary Actions

It is important to understand the difficulties and challenges associated with what Lieutenant Commander Lindsey did during his 24 months as the Commanding Officer of Torpedo Squadron 6. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey was the second Commanding Officer of Torpedo Squadron 6, taking command of the squadron on June 3, 1940. VT-6 was part of the USS Enterprise Air Group (EAG). The Navy was ramping up its pilot training programs and a large number of his pilots had only recently received their wings. Due to peacetime budget limitations and their cost, the US Navy was not allowed to use practice or real torpedoes to train their carrier pilots in the art of taking off from a carrier and launching them against practice targets. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey taught them these skills and low-level torpedo-launching tactics as best he could. They had to master formation flying, high-level bombing, scouting techniques, navigation, and carrier take offs and landings.

The actual torpedo he was to use, the Mark 13, had a maximum speed of 33.5 knots and a range of only 6300 yards. The Japanese carriers VT6 would see at the BOM had maximum speeds of: Hiryu and Soryu 34 knots, Akagi 31.5 knots, and Kaga 28 knots. These considerations were successfully employed by the Commanders of the Japanese carriers in the tactics they used against the US Navy torpedo squadrons during the battle. The other deficiencies of the Mark 13 included circular or erratic runs, broaching or

running too deep, and failure to detonate. The requirements for a successful torpedo drop in 1942 limited the height and speed of the aircraft to 120 feet and 100 mph, making the aircraft a sitting duck for enemy fighter aircraft and/or anti-aircraft fire. In a 1940 fleet gunnery exercise four of ten torpedoes sank and were never seen again, while five more ran erratically. The 10 percent success rate mirrored actual wartime results from February to June 1942 during 11 squadron strength attacks that yielded less than 10 possible hits from 95 known drops. Due to reporting difficulties in observing the number of actual hits and detonations these figures may be even lower. The problems with these torpedoes were well known within the fleet, and yet senior Navy leadership took no action before the war to fix the problems. The Mark 13 was all they had on the morning of June 4th. Similar problems plagued the submarine launched version of this torpedo. Initially the high miss rate was blamed on the ineptitude of the operators. Eventually senior leadership reported these problems and this finally caused the Bureau of Ordnance to investigate and redesign both torpedoes. By comparison, the Japanese Type 91 Mod 2 aerial torpedo displayed none of these issues, had a speed of 42 knots, and could be successfully dropped by an aircraft at 235 mph. The Mark 13 torpedo was matched to an obsolete delivery mechanism: the TBD Devastator.

When designed in 1934 the TBD Devastator was a state-of-the-art aircraft. By 1941 it was far eclipsed by its counterpart, the Japanese B5N Kate. The TBD's crew consisted of pilot, bombardier, and radioman gunner. The bombardier did not fly torpedo attack missions. It featured a 30-caliber machinegun fired by the pilot and a centerline 360 degree firing machinegun operated by the radioman gunner. Only 130 were produced. 30 TBDs were lost between initial deliveries in October 1937 and December 1941. The remaining 100 were distributed between seven aircraft carriers and several bases around the Atlantic and Pacific. Due to a shortage of aircraft in the fleet the aircraft were overused and tired. Tactical range with the 2200-pound Mark 13 torpedo was supposedly 435 miles but by 1942 the aircraft never flew and successfully returned from a strike of more than 200 miles. The maximum speed of the TBD was supposedly 206 mph, but the aircraft rarely achieved this speed, even in a dive. The maximum speed of the much more maneuverable Kate was 228 mph. The aircraft as-built had no armor to protect the crew or self-sealing fuel tanks. These fuel tanks were highly combustible if hit by tracer or cannon fire. These problems and the inherent dangers of torpedo attack were well known from the most junior to the most senior officers. However, none of the commanders could justify sparing the VT squadrons from torpedo attacks against the enemy at this point in the war; it was all hands-on-deck.

On December 7, 1941 the USS Enterprise was returning to Pearl Harbor from a mission to deliver a squadron of Marine fighters to Wake Island. The Enterprise flew part of its Air Group ashore early that morning. These aircraft were attacked by Japanese aircraft raiding Pearl Harbor. At 1649 Enterprise launched a strike against a contact report for the Japanese carrier task force. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey was the strike leader. The strike force consisted of 18 TBDs, six dive bombers, and six fighter escorts. Reaching the target area an hour later the group found nothing and the torpedo-equipped TBDs returned to Enterprise. Due to the scarcity of the torpedoes VT-6 was forced to land aboard the Enterprise with them still attached to their aircraft instead of safely jettisoning them at sea as was done later in the war when the torpedoes were much more plentiful. At 2017 the TBDs and dive bombers started to land on the Enterprise; the first night carrier landings in the US Navy by armed torpedo planes! These landings could only have been successful without the expertise demonstrated by these pilots based upon the training they had received from Lieutenant Commander Lindsey.

At approximately 0500 on February 1, 1942 Lieutenant Commander Lindsey led 9 TBDs loaded with four 500 pound bombs off the flight deck of the USS Enterprise to attack Kwajalein island. Due to the training regimen Lindsey had conducted each pilot successfully steered his heavily laden aircraft down the narrow, darkened deck, craning his neck to catch the dim lights hooded at the edges and at the end lift the dead weight of bombs and fuel into the air. Then the pilot had to locate in the three-dimensional darkness the tiny white light on the tail of the plane ahead, assure himself by the dim blue exhaust flames on either side that it was not a star, and join up. He could not ram the throttle forward as he would have liked and close as rapidly as possible because another pilot was attempting to follow the white light on his own tail and the cumulative effect would spoil the rendezvous. The laden planes circled, climbing in the dark, forming for the flight to the target. Only well trained and practiced airmen could have affected that night's rendezvous of two and a half squadrons without mishap.

Unfortunately a navigational error on the part of the Air Group Commander alerted the Japanese garrison of the arrival of the Enterprises' aircraft. By the time they began their attack they were greeted by heavy anti-aircraft fire and Japanese fighters. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey reported that there were numerous ships in the lagoon. This alerted the Enterprise to launch the remaining nine torpedo-equipped TBDs under the command of the squadron Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Lance Massey. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey then led his nine TBDs on a masthead attack against a cruiser, five submarines, two merchant ships, and three tankers among scores of smaller vessels. Many were reported smoking, listing or aground when this attack ended. Fifty minutes later the remaining nine TBDs arrived. Lieutenant Commander Massey attacked from 700 feet in a right echelon of echelons, his planes jinking and weaving to dodge the flak. Massey's planes' torpedoes found two of the tankers and one of the merchant ships before two more torpedoes hit the cruiser as it was trying to exit the lagoon. Despite the heavy anti-aircraft fire all 18 TBDs returned safely to the Enterprise. Upon returning to the Enterprise the first nine TBDs were reloaded with bombs and Lieutenant Commander Lindsey led them on a horizontal bombing attack of shipping at Wotje island. Between 1220 and 1235 these aircraft executed several careful attacks that left the island and the shipping in shambles. All nine TBDs successfully returned to the Enterprise. **Need to check other sources for damage to Jap ships**

At 0430 on February 24, 1942 the Enterprise sounded flight quarters for a raid against Wake Island. By 0647 the last TBD of nine led by Lieutenant Commander Lindsey was aloft. En route the TBDs worked up to 12,000 feet to execute a horizontal bombing attack. The other nine TBDs, armed with torpedoes, comprised the reserve in case worthwhile ship targets were discovered. The trip took an hour. A section of TBDs and several dive bombers laid a close pattern of bombs on ten gasoline storage tanks. Seven of the tanks went up in a roiling flair of orange flame and black smoke. Another section of TBDs wiped out a big four-engine seaplane moored south of Peale Island. (Wake Island is composed of three islets: Wake, Peale, and Wilkes). The damage imposed by the Enterprise Air Group deprived the Japanese of the use of Wake Island as an effective base for several months. The Enterprise raided Marcus Island on March 4, 1942 but VT-6 was held back in reserve and did not participate in this action.

On April 1, 1942 Lieutenant Commander Lindsey led VT-6 in a practice torpedo attack against the Enterprise at sea near Hawaii. On April 8, 1942, less Lieutenant Commander Massey, VT-6 flew out to the Enterprise to take part in the raid on Tokyo by Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle. The Enterprise linked up with the USS Hornet on April 13th and escorted the Hornet to a point 650 miles from Tokyo. On April 18th the Hornet launched Doolittle's 16 B-25 bombers and the task force turned around and expeditiously removed itself from Japanese patrolled waters and returned to Pearl Harbor on April 25th.

On April 30th, the Enterprise departed Pearl Harbor for the Coral Sea but did not arrive in time to participate in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Localized anti-submarine patrols and some training was conducted. On May 25th VT-6 participated in a training mission with the rest of the EAG. The Enterprise returned to Pearl Harbor on May 26, 1942. On May 28th the Enterprise departed Pearl Harbor en route to the waters north of Midway Island. At 1600 the EAG arrived overhead to land aboard.

The first aircraft to land was Lieutenant Commander Lindsey. An old hand at carrier landings he answered the paddles of the landing signal officer with routine precision. But over the stern of the Enterprise something went wrong, a sudden loss of power from his older aircraft, a bad airspeed indicator, a swirl of stack gas, the failure of a control feature -something. The TBD stalled, spun to the deck and skidded, broken, over the port side. The plane-guard destroyer Monaghan rushed in and rescued the three-man crew. The bombardier and radioman/gunner were unhurt but Lieutenant Commander Lindsey badly injured his back, broke several ribs - one of which punctured his lung, and was painfully cut and bruised about the face and chest. The aircrew was returned to the Enterprise the next day and Lieutenant Commander Lindsey was immediately sent to sickbay. It seemed doubtful that the battered Lindsey would fly any time soon.

During the six days after leaving Pearl Harbor the pilots of the Enterprise received intelligence briefings on the upcoming battle. The US Navy was reading the Japanese Naval code. The news was not good. Three American aircraft carriers, eight cruisers, and 15 destroyers would be opposed by nearly the entire Japanese Combined Fleet that included four of their largest, most capable, aircraft carriers featuring the cream of their best pilots and aircrews, four light aircraft carriers, 10 battleships, 13 heavy and 11 light cruisers, 66 destroyers, 20 submarines, and 60 other auxiliary ships. The American plan was to deliver surprise carrier attacks on the Japanese flanks after the Japanese aircraft raided Midway Island. To minimize the chance that spurious radio communications would give away the American carrier's presence, most flight operations during this period were limited to short range anti-submarine and search missions. Bad weather cancelled flight operations for three of the days.

Although the USS Yorktown's and USS Lexington's After-Action Reports from the Battle of the Coral Sea had not been officially circulated, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and the other squadron commanders knew the air groups on the Yorktown and the Lexington had divided their fighter strength during the two-day battle. Half of the fighters had flown cover for the slow-moving torpedo planes, and the other half had protected their carrier's dive bombers from attacks from the Japanese Zeros. On May 8 only four fighters successfully held off a swarm of Zeros allowing VT-5 to launch nine torpedoes, claiming three hits. Over the two-day battle, with the fighter escorts keeping the Zeros busy, all but one of the vulnerable Devastators made it back to their ships. Based upon these reports it was decided that the fighter escort for the first attack against the Japanese fleet would maintain their height advantage over the Japanese Zeros by flying at 20,000 feet over VT-8 and based upon a radio call from VT-6 dive down to protect the TBDs if needed.

Reveille came at 0330 on the Enterprise the morning of June 4, 1942. At one of the long tables in the wardroom, Commander's Charlie Fox and Wade McCluskey, and Lieutenant Paul Riley were eating their early breakfast when Lieutenant Commander Lindsey sat down. Lindsey's bandages had recently been removed. Fox could see the healing gash across Lindsey's forehead and the blue-blackness of his left eye and cheek. His face was so swollen he couldn't put on his goggles. He moved stiffly with the heavy tape still on his ribs and under his tan he was pale from loss of blood. Looking at him Fox was startled to

hear that a spare torpedo plane had been broken out for him to fly that morning. Lieutenant Riley felt the same way and said: "You look pretty beat-up Skipper. You really feel well enough to fly today." Lindsey, a loaded fork just in front of his mouth, turned his head to look at Riley. "This is the real thing today Pablo, the thing we've been training for. I'll take the squadron in."

At 0430 on June 4, 1942 the Japanese carriers launched 108 aircraft to attack Midway Island. At 0534 the American carriers heard a voice radio report from a Midway based patrol plane. "Enemy carriers." At 0552 a patrol plane reported two carriers and battleships course 135, speed 25 knots, bearing 247 degrees 180 miles from the American carriers. This location placed the Japanese fleet outside of the maximum combat range of the TBDs and fighters. Unknown at the time, and due to an error in navigation by the patrol plane crew, the Japanese were actually 220 miles from the American carriers. Consequently, the American ships attempted to close the distance by heading towards this sighting and increasing speed to 25 knots. Aboard the Enterprise Rear Admiral Spruance made the decision to launch the Enterprise and Hornet Air Groups at 0700 at what would have been maximum range for the TBDs and fighters. On Midway all available attack planes were scrambled and directed toward the Japanese. None of the 26 Marine fighters on Midway accompanied the attack planes but instead intercepted the incoming Japanese aircraft, where they were slaughtered by the more maneuverable Zeros that were flown by vastly more experienced Japanese pilots.

At 0702 the first aircraft from Midway, the six TBFs of the VT-8 Detachment, began their attack on the Japanese Fleet. Assaulted by 28 Japanese Zeros well outside the Japanese screening vessels Lieutenant Fieberling led them in an attack on the Hiryu. One TBF was immediately disabled, the pilot fearing he was about crash turned towards a light cruiser and fired his torpedo. Bracing for impact the wounded pilot discovered he could still fly the aircraft using his trim tabs. With a dead ball turret gunner, a dead or unconscious radioman, no hydraulics, most of his controls, to include his compass, shot away and over 70 bullet and 20 mm cannon holes in his aircraft his was the only TBF to return to Midway island. Like the other five pilots, who earned them posthumously, Ensign Earnest was awarded the Navy Cross for this attack. He was given a second Navy Cross for successfully piloting the stricken TBF to Midway. This enabled the first TBF off the production line to be evaluated for battle damage by engineers.

Immediately after this attack four Army B-26 bombers also torpedo attacked the Akagi. Two of those aircraft were also shot down by the Zeros, the others were able to return to Midway but never flew again due to battle damage. Admiral Kusaka, who witnessed these attacks from Akagi, was impressed by the steadfast courage of all these pilots. He had thought only Japanese pilots did things like that. Admiral Nagumo, the commander of the Japanese carrier force, was impressed by the attack of the American torpedo planes. The decadent Americans were not supposed to fight like this. Based upon the concern that similar future attacks from Midway might be successful he made a fateful decision to remove the torpedoes and anti-ship bombs from his reserve aircraft and to rearm them with more effective "land" bombs for a second attack on Midway.

At 0700 the first aircraft off the Enterprise's flight deck were ten replacement Combat Air Patrol (CAP) fighters. Thirty-three dive bombers followed. After that the flight deck was respotted with the TBDs and their ten fighter escorts, while the dive bombers climbed to altitude. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey's plane captain had to help him into the front seat of his Devastator. Opening and closing the canopy would have proven difficult for him given the pain associated with his back and rib injuries.

These canopies also slammed shut in the event of a water landing, imprisoning the aircrew in a sinking aircraft unless the crew could open them.

The plan was for the entire EAG to depart together. However, one of the 15 TBDs would not start and, along with other delays associated with the re-spot, Rear Admiral Spruance became concerned the strike force would not be able to attack the Japanese carriers before they launched a counterstrike. At 0745 he ordered the dive bombers to proceed without the fighters and torpedo planes. Due to the faster cruising speed of the dive bombers this nearly ensured that a coordinated strike, so necessary to protect the vulnerable torpedo bombers, would not occur. It also ensured that the EAG would enter the battle piece-meal and the dive bombers would have no fighter support, since the fighters were going to stay at altitude over the torpedo bombers.

VT-6 took to the air around 0800 climbing to 2,000 feet on a course of 240 degrees. In the confusion the Enterprise's ten escort fighters mistook VT-8 for VT-6 and flew above them, leaving VT-6 unescorted. At 0930 Lieutenant Commander Lindsey saw wispy smoke columns 30 miles to the northwest and altered his course to the right. The smoke was due to the Japanese task force maneuvering at high speed to repel the attack of VT-8. Soon Lieutenant Commander Lindsey discerned three Japanese carriers loosely surrounded by their screening vessels. He checked his fuel gauges and searched the sky above in all directions for his fighter support and the rest of the EAG. Nothing was in sight. Lindsey knew that the tactical plan called for coordinated attacks by dive bombers and torpedo planes with fighter protection. He knew what his chances were in an unsupported strike. But he had been out nearly two hours and it was doubtful even now if his squadron could make it home. He hoped the fighters and dive bombers would show up but he could not wait.

Lieutenant Commander Lindsey shoved his throttle and mixture controls up against their stops and nosed over in a shallow power glide to attack altitude. The rest of his squadron followed. VT-6 approached the Japanese fleet from the south so the Japanese carriers fled at high speed to the north. This presented a narrower target and lengthened the time it took for the 100 knot TBDs to reach a satisfactory position for their torpedo drops. A drop from any aft angle, and the ability of the slower torpedo to catch up to the target before it exhausted its fuel, spelled failure. For success VT-6 had to work his way around to the front of the carriers to attack from bow angles.

Lieutenant Commander Lindsey aimed for the nearest carrier, the Kaga, but the rate of closure was agonizingly slow. TBDs at 100 knots chasing a carrier making 28 knots. He decided on a split attack and sent his Executive Officer, Lieutenant Ely, with 7 TBDs farther to the north to circle around the Kaga's port side. At 15 miles the Japanese CAP, comprised 33 Zeros, some low on the deadly explosive 20 mm cannon ammunition from their assault on VT-8 began their attacks. Both Lindsey and Ely radioed for fighter support but their pleas were unheard by the fighter's commander. As they had with VT-8's attack, the Japanese fighter pilots demonstrated skill and determination in working over the hapless TBDs. For VT-6 there was only the slowly growing shape of the Kaga which turned maddeningly away to starboard keeping the Devastators always astern and to port, denying them the beam attack they had to have. The range closed with agonizing slowness, a mile and a half each minute, as the enemy tracers smoked by, holing wings, slowing engines, wounding, killing. For the gunners facing aft over their twin 30-calibers, there was a sky full of olive-drab fighters which dived in fast from behind, guns winking along the wings, and flashed by close up, banking sharply for reattacks.

At eight miles black puffs of anti-aircraft fire began to appear in the clear air around Lindsey's harried squadron, and the planes jarred and shook with the bursting shells. The pilots twisted and wove, climbing and diving under the fire of planes and ships, but always pressing in. Initially there were two Zeros for every Devastator but as the TBDs started to fall the odds grew even worse. As the range closed, medium and light anti-aircraft machine guns from the escorting battleships, cruisers, and destroyers opened up. One TBD exploded spectacularly when a 20 mm cannon shell detonated its torpedo. One after another the other Devastators slid, cartwheeled, or dived into the sea as fighter bullets found the engines, or the controls, or the gas tanks, or the pilots. Splotches of skidding orange flame and black smoke, long tearing splashes, and an occasional slowly tumbling wing tip with a white star, appeared on the approaches to the port side of the still turning Kaga. The Japanese focused initially on the leading aircraft to decapitate the squadron's leadership in the hopes that this would breakup or deter the remaining aircraft. Consequently, both Lindsey and Ely were shot down early, dying of wounds or in the resulting stone wall collision with the sea.

When half of the fourteen aircraft had been destroyed, no one would have blamed the remaining pilots for jettisoning their torpedoes in the unequal fight and attempting to shoot their way out and home. Such was the leadership of Lieutenant Commander Lindsey that none did. No one even dropped at long or middle range and turned away. Every pilot either made his drop close aboard or was killed before he could do so. Five or six survived long enough to launch their torpedoes but the attack angles were still poor because of adroit Japanese shiphandling. That and the unreliable torpedoes assured no hits. The Zeros harried VT-6's withdrawal. Only five TBDs cleared the hell of the Japanese fleet. Later one of these TBDs ditched, the remaining four were able to return to the Enterprise, where one was immediately deemed irreparable and promptly pushed overboard. It was all over by 1000.

VT-6's torpedoes had missed but the entire area around the Japanese fleet was covered with the smoke of many ships maneuvering at high speed to avoid VT-6, smoke screens thrown up by Japanese ships to conceal or shield their aircraft carriers, and the black puffs of anti-aircraft fire. Many of the Zeros were now low on ammunition, especially the deadly explosive 20 mm cannon rounds, or low on fuel and needed to return to their carriers. It is believed some of the Zeros fell to the guns of the radiomen. Below decks the rearming of aircraft had to be suspended while all the carriers made radical high speed evasive maneuvers, thereby delaying the planned Japanese strike on the recently discovered American carriers. However, both torpedo squadron attacks had focused all the Japanese CAP at low altitude, which set the stage for the next portion of the battle.

The 12 TBDs of VT-3 from the USS Yorktown were next. The Yorktown's Air Group (YAG) was slightly more experienced and bloodied than the other American carriers due to their participation in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Having launched last, the YAG stayed together en route to the Japanese fleet. At 1003 VT-3 spotted the smoke from the VT-6 attack and altered course to the right (west). Noticing this, the dive bombers at altitude altered their course accordingly. Unlike the other torpedo squadrons, VT-3 was escorted by six fighters. Approximately 14-18 miles from the Japanese carriers the first two Zeros hit. Dozens followed. Again, the Japanese carriers turned away from the torpedo planes. VT-3s fighter support was overwhelmed and had to fight for their lives, but this reduced the number of Zeros attacking VT-3. By 1040 it was over. 10 of the 12 TBDs were shot down attacking the Hiryu, the others were so damaged they were forced to ditch on their way back to the Yorktown. No hits were scored. None had turned back. However, the Japanese CAP were all down low, focused on the TBDs and fighters. Rearming and respotting the Japanese flight decks for their planned strike on the American

carriers again suffered due to the violent maneuvering of the ships and the need to service their fighters.

Unnoticed, at 1020 the dive bombers of the YAG began their attack on the Soryu. At the same time, the dive bombers of the USS Enterprise, having finally found the Japanese fleet, began their attacks on the Akagi and Kaga. Unmolested by any Japanese fighters until they pulled out of their dives, the dive bombers had free rein. In five minutes, the flight decks and hangar bays of these three carriers were exploding from bombs dropped by the dive bombers. The American bombs exploded the bombs and torpedoes on the Japanese aircraft and the ordnance that had been removed from the aircraft but had not been moved back to the magazines due to the chaos of the American torpedo bomber attacks. Each carrier would sink within the next 24 hours. Although planes from the Hiryu would force the abandonment and eventual demise of the Yorktown, the Hiryu would be left a smoldering hulk by a second attack from the dive bombers later that day.

Undeniable Facts and the Role VT-6 Performed in Victory

The American victory at Midway was the turning point in the war. Until Midway the Japanese were on the offensive, after Midway they were on defense for the remainder of the war. At the time the Navy's awards board awarded the Navy Cross to Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and to each of the pilots of his squadron, much of the historical information that is now available was not known. For example: it is unlikely that the awards board was made aware of the grievous wounds Lieutenant Commander Lindsey suffered during the crash of this TBD on May 28th and the physical limitations these wounds placed upon him the morning of June 4th. A lesser man could have easily chosen not to fly that day. Knowing the extreme dangers posed by using obsolescent aircraft, with highly suspect torpedoes against the best fighter at the time (the Zero) and a large Japanese fleet was daunting enough. Doing so with a wrenched back and with other debilitating injuries that could conceivably have not allowed him to escape a downed aircraft.. is the true essence of determination and leadership. VT-6 was one of several squadrons where many heroes of the battle gallantly gave their lives and were posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Of the 100 aircrew assigned to US Navy torpedo bombers, 86 perished. A majority of the remaining were wounded. If he had survived, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey would probably have balked from the award of the MOH. Since then, the testimony of hundreds of witnesses on both sides resulted in approximately 20 books and hundreds of articles that have dissected every aspect of the battle.

There are two general points to be addressed here. The first are the facts and results of the battle no historian would disagree with. The second set of judgements are accepted by most, but not all historians, as to the pivotal role VT-6 played in the victory.

Under the inspired leadership of Lieutenant Commander Lindsey Torpedo Squadron 6 went from a peacetime unit to a fully capable combat unit in six months. This was all done under the most difficult circumstances possible. Modern day Naval Officers should fully appreciate this achievement. Together with precious few experienced subordinates (none of whom had seen combat either), Lindsey molded a group of fledgling aviators into a unit that would follow him to their deaths. Men who had never taken off the deck of an aircraft carrier with a torpedo, much less made a torpedo attack into the jaws of overwhelming enemy forces, never hesitated, or turned back. Men who had not gone through the formal process of "carrier-quals" never hesitated to make their first carrier landings as part of normal

carrier operations because there was no time for such formal qualification. Such was the elan Lindsey had created in his squadron.

The first American force that attacked the Japanese carriers, the VT-8 TBF Detachment, attacked with such bravado that Admiral Nagumo decided he needed to eliminate the threat of additional Midway based aircraft and ordered the rearming of his reserve aircraft. Later, when Japanese scouts reported the presence of US Navy forces on his flank, he countermanded this order. The result of this change was he could not immediately launch his reserve against the American fleet and the presence of large amounts of ordnance in their hanger bays that the Japanese did not have the time to return to their magazines.

The TBD, and even the newer TBF, could not survive an extended engagement against superior numbers of Zeros without fighter support. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and the other squadron commanders on the USS Enterprise knew this and a plan was developed to provide fighter escort to VT-6. Unfortunately, these fighters mistook VT-8 for VT-6 on the flight to the Japanese fleet and were not available to support VT-6.

The information on the attacks of VT-8 and VT-3 was included to show the losses and results from these similar attacks were also grievous, and only mitigated somewhat by the fact that, once VT-8 had attacked, some of the Zeros had to return for ammunition and fuel. Additionally, VT-3 had some fighter support. More importantly the constant need to land, service and launch the Zeros to defend their carriers precluded respotting these flight decks with the rearmed strike force, thereby saving the American carriers from enduring a major attack.

The timing and sequence of the almost continuous American torpedo squadron attacks resulted in all the Japanese Zeros being at low altitude when the American dive bombers arrived. This allowed the dive bombers to attack without opposition or losses, greatly improving their accuracy and chances for success.

There are several important decisions and events that made victory at Midway possible for the United States. If VT-8 had not attacked the Japanese fleet, VT-6 would not have seen the smoke from this engagement. If VT-6 had not then made their attack, VT-3 would not have seen the smoke from that engagement, and it is likely none of the Yorktown Air Group would have found the Japanese carriers. This would have resulted in the survival of the carrier Soryu. It can be assumed Lieutenant Commander McClusky's Enterprise dive bombers would have still found the Japanese carriers as they did. However, had the torpedo bombers not impacted the amount, effectiveness, or location of the Japanese CAP, McClusky's attack might have failed or been severely impacted by the CAP resulting in the survival of the Kaga and/or the Akagi.

In summary, Captain Mitscher of the Hornet believed the pilots of his torpedo squadron deserved the MOH. It was not his place to recommend the pilots of VT-3 or VT-6 for this award but it is clear there were no differences between any of these squadrons in regard to their valor and fearlessness. Consequently, it is clear that the pilot of every torpedo plane that attacked the Japanese fleet at Midway met the criteria for the MOH:

:

- a. Displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her own life above and beyond the call of duty.
- b. While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States.
- c. There being no margin of doubt or possibility of error in awarding this award.
- d. That the act must be so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes the award's gallantry above all lesser forms of bravery.
- e. That the award is inherently credit for Extraordinary Heroism (EH) in the line of duty per Tab 17 of Appendix 17 to SECNAV M-1650.1.

The efforts and impacts of Lieutenant Commander Lindsey's actions far exceed the efforts and import of any of the others, excepting the Commanding Officers of Torpedo Squadron Three and Torpedo Squadron Eight, which will be addressed by separate correspondence. The fact his cumulative efforts resulted in the same level of award as all the others (Navy Cross) can, and should be, corrected,



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
1000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Dusty M. Johnson
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0000

Dear Representative Johnson:

Thank you for your recent letter to the Secretary of the Navy requesting the Medal of Honor (MOH) be awarded posthumously to Lieutenant Commanders Lance Massey, Eugene Lindsey, and John Charles Waldron for their actions in June 1942 during the Battle of Midway. I am responding on behalf of Secretary Del Toro.

Your admiration for these three Naval aviators is understandable. Their heroic and selfless actions, and those of the other aviators in their squadrons, at Midway are widely known, well documented, and universally celebrated. The military decorations they received in recognition of their actions have also been the subject of great interest and scrutiny. A few months after the battle, they were all awarded the prestigious Navy Cross, the Nation's second highest decoration for valor. Many of their fellow squadron mates were also awarded the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, or other prestigious combat medals.

During November 1942, congressional representatives from South Dakota petitioned the Navy to specifically reconsider the case of John Waldron, and award him the MOH. The request was referred to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet—Admiral Chester Nimitz at the time. Admiral Nimitz and his staff conducted a thorough review of the matter and concluded the Navy Cross had been the appropriate decoration. His letter of March 1, 1943, to the Chief of Naval Personnel stated, *The Board upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway judges that the action of Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, U.S. Navy, when reviewed with comparable cases, did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciates the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty by other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award.*

Immediately following the war, the Navy conducted a widespread review of personal and unit decorations made during the war, and specifically reviewed almost 30,000 individual cases in which nominations had resulted in no award or a lower award than originally nominated. Official records confirm that this post-war review board determined the actions of LCDRs Waldron and Massey did not merit award of the MOH. We did not find documents explicitly stating that LCDR Lindsey's case was reconsidered, but it is reasonable to presume that his actions were known and used as comparison for the other reviews. In 1942, all of these awards were routed through Admiral Nimitz's office, and favorably endorsed to the Secretary of the

Navy for award of the Navy Cross. Therefore, when the Pacific Fleet Board of Awards reviewed LCDR Waldron's case a few months later, it is certain LCDR Lindsey's nomination was in their files and was among the *comparable cases* with which LCDR Waldron's actions were examined.

Department of Defense regulations preclude reconsideration of any previously approved military decoration, or previously considered and disapproved award nomination, for upgrade to the MOH unless new, substantive, and materially relevant evidence is presented that was not reasonably available when the original nomination was considered. The regulations clarify that new evidence that merely adds details to what was previously provided will not meet the new and relevant requirement. Examples of acceptable evidence include official reports and eyewitness testimony. Without such new evidence, the Department can take no further action on these cases.

This determination in no way diminishes the heroism of these three men, or the Navy's pride and gratitude for having men such as them in our ranks. Their bravery and total devotion to duty continue to inspire generations of Sailors and particularly our Naval aviators.

Thank you for writing the Secretary, and for your continued support of America's Navy. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

2/1/2022

X

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Acting CORB Counsel

(b) (6)

By direction

LINDSEY, Eugene Elbert (Missing) Lt Comdr USN

USS ENTERPRISE

Midway

Recommended for NAVY CROSS by CinC Pac Serial 18a P15(I)
of 7-18-42—Ref: CinC Pac Ltr P15(1)/QB/(05) Serial 3013
pf 7-16-42—CinC Pac Ltr 8-1-42—P15(2)/(05) Serial 3144
Rec BuPers QB4(840) 8-7-42

Awarded 8-13-42 Bd Awd

For extraordinary heroism & distinguished service as
pilot of VT-6 in Battle of Midway on June 4. He pressed
home his attack against Jap invasion fleet with such
boldness, determination & utter disregard of personal
safety that he contributed immeasurably to the magnifi-
(over)

cent victory of our forces. Conditions under which the pilots of his sqdn attacked were such that it is highly improbable the occasion will ever arise where other pilots will be called upon to demonstrate equal courage. His conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.